

M E M O I R S
O F A
PYTHAGOREAN. K

IN WHICH ARE DELINEATED
THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, GENIUS,
AND POLITY

O F
ANCIENT NATIONS.

INTERSPERSED WITH A
VARIETY OF ANECDOTES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATER-NOSTER ROW. 1785.

M E M O I R S

P R E F A C E

INTRODUCTION

E D M U N D H A R I S O N

THE MANNER OF THE MANUSCRIPT

THE PERIOD OF THE MANUSCRIPT

A Description of this work

executed and whether it is an

original or a translation, are

points impossible to be deter-

mined from any thing which oc-

curs in the narrative. The au-

thor seems to have written it

under a positive consciousness of

the Metempsychosis, or Trans-

migration of the Soul. But it is

printed for G. D. and J. Robinson,

LONDON: 1782.

P R E F A C E

O F T H E

E D I T O R.

AT what period the Manuscript of this work was executed, and whether it be an original or a translation, are points impossible to be determined from any thing which occurs in the narrative. The author seems to have written it under a positive consciousness of the Metempsychosis, or Transmigration of the Soul. But it is
an

an opinion more consistent with modern Philosophy, to suppose that he has assumed this doctrine only as a foundation to the work; and that his design was to exhibit the manners, customs, and state of the ancient nations in a style more descriptive than has hitherto ever been attempted. Considered in this light, it must be acknowledged that these Memoirs have no small claim to attention. In the more essential parts they are supported by the testimony of ancient writers; and where

where no concurring evidence is cited, the narrative has so much the air of probability, that it almost appears equally entitled to historical credit. As a mixture however of fiction and truth, it blends information with entertainment; and those readers who would acquire a knowledge of the ancient nations, will find in these Memoirs a more copious, as well as more lively representation of them than any Library now can afford. The prostitution at the Temple of Venus, the Sale of the Babylonian Young Women,

2 T H [I VI] H O C

Women, the Sacæ, the College
of Chaldeans, and the Hanging
Gardens at Babylon, of all which
History has preserved little else
but the name; with the intro-
duction of Fire into Scythia, and
many customs of the Egyptians,
and other nations, are delineated in
such a manner as if the author
had actually been present at those
scenes. He appears in the cha-
racter of a Traveller, not only
through different countries, but a
series of ages; and has collected
in his progress some of the most
curious occurrences in ancient
history.

C O N T E N T S

FIRST VOLUME

CHAP. I. Introduction. Page 1

CHAP. II. Journey to Babylon. 11

CHAP. III. Account of the Prostitution at the Temple of Venus, and of another custom amongst the Babylonians. 22

CHAP. IV. An extraordinary occurrence in the Market-place. 35

CHAP. V. The same subject continued. A high dispute between the Priests. The great Humanity of the women. Persons and dress of the Babylonians. 50

CHAP. VI. Description of Babylon. The Temple of Belus. The Hanging-Gardens. Anecdotes of Sardanapalus. The Obelisk. 65

CHAP.

CHAP. VII. A singular narrative concerning an Assyrian King. A curious ballad. A tragical incident. 92

CHAP. VIII. A strange imposture practised on a gentleman and his wife. 116

CHAP. IX. Account of the Sacæ. 124

CHAP. X. Description of the environs of Babylon. The King. An extraordinary funeral. 137

CHAP. XI. The College of the Chaldeans. 158

CHAP. XII. The same subject continued. 169

CHAP. XIII. The same subject continued. Account of a curious exorcism. 184

CHAP. XIV. Reflections on the state of Learning in Babylon. Verses presented to Semiramis. 196

CHAP.

[1]

MEMOIRS
OF A
PYTHAGOREAN.

CHAP. I.
INTRODUCTION.

MY soul was launched into the world soon after the general Deluge, and has now undergone three hundred and fourteen transmigrations. I might therefore begin my history at a very early period; but, for particular reasons, I shall

VOL. I.

B

content

content myself with deducing it from a later æra. I was born in Armenia on the day when Candaules, king of Lydia, was assassinated by Gyges, to whom, in a fit of extreme folly, he had exposed the person of his beautiful queen quite naked. The singularity of this incident spread the news rapidly over the East ; but to our family it proved particularly interesting, as the queen was nearly related to my father. He was a native of Lydia, and had the richest possessions in that country. His estate lay upon the banks of the Pactolus, a little below the place where Midas washed himself, and impregnated the river with gold. The riches amassed by
my

my ancestors, during three successive generations, were so great as to become an object of envy to the king, who had his residence at Sardis. By the advice therefore of an uncle, who was a man of prudence and discernment, he was persuaded to withdraw his treasure privately from Lydia, and to betake himself to a country at some distance, where he might avoid the depredation and personal violence which there was reason to apprehend from the avarice of his formidable neighbour.

The means first proposed for carrying the design into execution, was to procure a vessel at the nearest port in Ionia; but the danger of a discovery

by the king, or, if this could be eluded, the hazard of falling a sacrifice to pirates, who were then extremely numerous upon those coasts, induced him to change the plan of conducting his emigration: resolving at last, as the safest course, to transport himself over the mountains. Accordingly, with his own slaves and horses, he set out in the night, furnished with such a quantity of gold as might secure a splendid establishment in any part of Asia. The remainder of his vast treasures, in case any misfortunate accident should happen upon his journey, he previously buried in the ground, in a spot known only to his faithful uncle; and,

to

to prevent any pursuit from the king of Lydia, he took care to have a report propagated, that, in consequence of a solemn vow formerly made, he was gone to dedicate the greater part of his riches to the Delphic Oracle, now become famous through all the Grecian colonies.

The stratagem succeeded to his wish : he continued his route without any molestation, and at last arrived in Armenia, in the northern part of which he purchased a large tract of land, much resembling the beautiful estate he had abdicated on the banks of the Pactolus. What rendered this situation more delightful to him was, that it commanded an extensive prospect

of the Euphrates, and lay within a few miles of the mountain upon which the ark of Noah rested when the waters had begun to decline.

My father has often carried me with him to view this venerable spot, which he always beheld with a degree of enthusiasm. A large portion of the ark was yet remaining; and, from the dryness of the situation, the whole edifice might have resisted the injuries of time: but it had been gradually dilapidated by the inhabitants of the circumjacent countries, where almost every family preserved a fragment of this sacred relic.

The Deluge was an event which my worthy parent used often to mention.

tion. "My dear Polydore, he would say to me, I consider it as the grand epoch of the transmigration of souls. For, though my soul has changed its mansion almost three hundred times, it never yet inhabited the body of any aquatic animal; nor have I ever been informed of any soul that was doomed to such a state of existence; which must have been the case with many, had transmigration begun before the Deluge. Is this remark conformable also to your experience, Polydore?" "Entirely, my dear papa, replied I; and my soul has now transmigrated a hundred and fourteen times." "Then, my dear, said he, you are older than your father; but,

according to the principles of the metempsychosis, this is neither paradoxical nor absurd. What was your last transmigration, my dear child?" At this question I blushed, and hesitated to reply. "Don't conceal this circumstance from your father, my dear," said he. "I know sufficiently well the infirmities of our nature, and have been too often led astray by human weakness. But I have at length acquired the important knowledge of the duties we owe to heaven; and by discharging these carefully, we shall escape all disagreeable transmutations. This useful knowledge, my dear child, I am now to communicate to you in writing, and let me entreat

entreat that you engrave it on your heart. You will find it a more valuable possession than all the riches, great as they are, which I shall leave you. But first, tell me ingenuously what was your last transmigration: Speak out my dear." "Dear papa, replied I, in my last transmigration I animated a horse during fifteen years." "I am glad, said he, that you were not doomed to an inferior animal. But by strictly observing the concise system of morality which I shall put into your hands, you will henceforth enjoy the happiness, of never being degraded from the human species." He then gave me the valuable code he had mentioned, and which

which I have ever since endeavored studiously to make the rule of my life.

When I was in the three and twentieth year of my age, my father died, and left me in the most opulent circumstances of any man in Armenia. Having a strong desire for travelling, I determined to gratify my curiosity by a visit to Babylon, a city at this time the most renowned in the world. With this resolution I set about arranging my domestic affairs, and in two months was prepared to take my departure.

C H A P. II.

JOURNEY TO BABYLON.

THE time when I set out from Armenia was about the middle of March, a season at which, in that country, the spring was greatly advanced. Innumerable trees of various kinds were in full blossom; and the fields were covered with verdure, intermixed with natural flowers; whilst bleating flocks and lowing herds overspread the valleys on every hand.

Accompanied by two servants on horseback, I pursued my route during
a whole

a whole day along the banks of the Araxes, near which my house was situated. This river has always been celebrated for the rapidity of its current * ; and the sight of it at present encreased my ardor to descend into the plains of Asia. After travelling ten days, we met with few houses; but the number of tents might have been sufficient for the encampment of a great army. To one or other of those which lay nearest, we always had recourse, in the day for occasional refreshment, and in the night for repose. This had been the country of the Patriarchs, and of all I had ever seen, was the

* Pontem indignatus Araxes.

most happily adapted to the ease and tranquillity of the pastoral life. Primæval simplicity of manners was still the characteristic of the inhabitants. They received us with all the unaffected marks of the most cordial friendship, and seemed from their behaviour to think that we had as good a right to the produce of nature as themselves. Living near the scene where the whole human race had once consisted of a single family, they universally regarded its descendants as their brothers and sisters. In all the tents which we entered, the best entertainment they could readily afford was constantly laid before us. In some of them, if our

our

time would permit, a tender kid from the flock was dressed for the gratification of our appetite; cakes of the finest flour were prepared with all possible speed; and in every tent the milk, and butter, and cheese were the most delicious I had ever tasted. The juice of the grape was likewise not unknown to this happy people; but they used it with such temperance that they were utter strangers to intoxication.

Uninterrupted health and cheerfulness were the natural concomitants of such a life. Of the use of any medicine, they had never so much as heard. When I mentioned the division of property which took place in
 Armenia

Armenia and other countries, they seemed astonished at the degeneracy of mind which could dictate such an idea. The hills, the valleys, the fruit-trees, were all in common amongst them : nor was any thing appropriated throughout the country, except the possession of the marriageable women. A violation of modesty was held infamous in both sexes ; and it was the general voice of tradition, that never once, since the Deluge, had the land been polluted with human blood.

The happiness which I enjoyed amongst this people induced me to proceed only by short stages ; and had not my curiosity to visit Babylon overpowered

powered every other consideration, I could willingly have spent my life in this delightful society, without any regard for the riches which I had left behind me in Armenia. I might have obtained, and was offered by many of the inhabitants a number of sheep, goats, and cows: my two servants might have shared the same beneficence: with tents and necessary utensils a thousand would have furnished us; and we might each of us have procured ourselves wives amongst the fairest virgins of the country. But all these allurements I sacrificed to my invincible passion for travelling; not however for the idle curiosity of only gratifying the sight, but
of

of viewing the manners and polity of nations where the arts and sciences are cultivated. The attainment of wisdom was always the object of my researches; of wisdom as conducive to happiness: but sorry I am to say, that, though I have long cultivated a familiar acquaintance with the former, the latter has hitherto eluded my most ardent pursuit. I have perpetually found her to be a phantom which all are hunting after, but which I believe no mortal ever enjoyed, except on the banks of the Euphrates.

Whilst I remained in this country, I was inquisitive after monuments of the antediluvian times; and, though

I failed in all my researches concerning the situation of paradise, my curiosity was not wholly ungratified. On a small eminence, at a little distance from the Euphrates, and surrounded with a beautiful grove of orange-trees, I was shown an object, which rivetted my attention so much that I could not quit the spot for two hours. It was an oblong stone, of a large size, and bore the appearance of having once been rudely fashioned by the hand of the mason. Though covered on all sides with moss, the following inscription, in Hebrew characters, was legible:

HERE

HERE LIES

A D A M

THE FATHER OF MANKIND

AGED 930 YEARS.

Tears of veneration trickled down my cheeks while I gazed at the monument of the man who had peopled the world: and a fit of sympathetic affection seizing me, I could not refrain from embracing all the persons present, as lineal descendants of the same progenitor. “O! my dear brethren, said I, for at this moment I can call you only by that name, would to God that men al-

ways kept in mind the relation in which they stand to each other! Every kind of fraud and violence, those scourges of the earth, would then for ever be extinguished; and innocence, with tranquillity in her train, might spread the blessings of paradise over the world. Happy are ye, who have this memorial constantly before your eyes. If I cannot hope for the power of rendering its influence more general, at least the impresson of it will remain indelible in my heart."

After continuing our journey two days longer, the river became navigable; and as a vessel might easily be procured, I resolved to proceed to Babylon by water, as the easiest and
 most

most expeditious method of travelling. I therefore left my horses with a very obliging landlord at our last stage, and embarked with my servants on board a vessel, which sailed with us immediately. The country on both sides afforded the prospect of a rich soil, but very different in appearance from that through which we had passed. The trees were lessened in number as well as variety, whilst high cultivation superseded the beauties of nature. The lofty towers of Babylon encreased every hour to the sight; and on the third day from our embarkation we landed in the heart of this magnificent and celebrated capital.

C H A P. III.

ACCOUNT OF THE PROSTITUTION
AT THE TEMPLE OF VENUS, AND
OF ANOTHER EXTRAORDINARY
CUSTOM AMONGST THE BABYLO-
NIANS.

S OON after my arrival I visited the temple of Venus, many of which edifices had been pointed out to me on the banks of the Euphrates. It was a plain building of brick, with four columns in the front, on which was erected a pediment. Behind, and on each side of the temple, was a cluster of palm-trees, the retreat of the parties who came to sacrifice

crifice to the goddess. As it was the custom in this country that every young woman, on arriving at the marriageable age, should prostitute herself to some stranger at the temple of Venus*, those places never failed to be daily visited by many of both sexes. At the time I went, I counted a hundred and thirty-five young women, with garlands of flowers around their temples †, sitting upon benches which were ranged on each side of the entry. But as I soon after observed many come out from the trees, whither they had retired with their male companions, the whole number of the votaries must

* Herodotus.

† Ibid.

have been much greater than what I have mentioned.

Many of the women were handsome, and all such nearly of the same age; but amongst those who enjoyed not the advantage of personal charms, were some, as I judged, little short of the age of forty, if not upwards. The case of these was truly pitiable. For as no woman in this country could be married, until she had been deflowered at the temple of Venus, one who had not the qualities which could attract a paramour, might visit the temple daily, for several years, without success*.

The method of conducting this

* Herodotus.

superstitious prostitution was settled by the priests, who enjoyed the whole emolument of the trade. When any man came to the temple, which he was at liberty to do as often as he pleased, he walked along the side of the benches, surveying the female votaries, until he pitched upon the person with whom he chose to have commerce. As soon as he determined on the object of election, he threw into her lap the money which he intended to give as her fare; pronouncing at the same time, "I pray for you to the goddess Mylitta"* , the name by which they called Venus. There was a fixed sum, less than

* Herodotus.

which

which he could not offer, but might give as much more as he pleased. When he had thus chosen his partner, she was not permitted to refuse compliance, so that they immediately retired into the grove. On their return, they both entered the temple; where the man having confirmed to the priest the performance of the act, the woman delivered the money she had received, and obtained a small medal, as a certificate of her having submitted to the sacrifice. Some of the medals were of silver, others of lead; but on the face of all of them was a figure of the goddess Venus. On the reverse was inscribed the temple,

ple, the year, and the number in the order of distribution.

Whilst I was at the temple, some young women of rank came thither in chariots; who, without alighting, and performing the accustomed sacrifice, sent a message into the temple to the priest*. He immediately came out with silver tickets in his hand, and giving them to the ladies, who presented him with a handsomer fee than he received from the common votaries, he repeated to each of them the usual salutation, and they departed.

A gentleman, with whom I had a little before entered into conversa-

* Herodotus.

tion, happening to stand near me, I asked him the reason why any young women, of whatever rank, were allowed an exemption from a practice which the superstition of the country regarded as sacred and indispensable. His answer was, "It is taken for granted, that, though those young women of quality are averse to prostituting themselves publicly at the temple, they always sacrifice to Venus at home, as soon as they are capable of it."

As this gentleman appeared not only to be sensible, but well acquainted with historical and traditional anecdotes, I begged of him to inform me what might be the origin
of

of this extraordinary custom of sacrificing publicly to Venus, so repugnant to the sentiments of all other nations, except the Lydians, and the people of Cyprus*. “This usage, said he, has been established in Babylon for some centuries, and was introduced by one of our kings, whose name was Belonus. He married a beautiful young lady, the daughter of one of his subjects; but, from some obstruction to his embraces, was never able to consummate the marriage. After concealing the matter some time, he at last determined to obtain the opinion of the Magi concerning it. A consultation being ac-

* Herodotus.

cordingly

cordingly held, the case was by some imputed to enchantment, and by others to the wrath of the goddess Venus, whom it was imagined the queen had offended by her inviolable chastity. To appease the enraged deity, solemn sacrifices were enjoined to be performed throughout the kingdom; and a law was enacted, that no Babylonish woman should ever be admitted to marry, until her capacity for the nuptial rites had been *proved* at the temple of Venus."

When he had finished this narrative, which he did with a smile, I resumed the conversation. "The account you have given, said I, is extremely

extremely plausible, and perfectly corresponds with the character of an age devoted to the influence of superstition. But I should be glad to know whether, in general, the women of this country are content with sacrificing at the temple of Venus only once in their life. I should much fear that the law which enjoins such a sacrifice, would operate towards promoting the repetition of it."

"Your apprehension, replied he, is well founded. With many of the poorer sort of women prostitution is here a trade: I wish I could not add, that, if not openly at the temple, as is frequently the case, it is too generally

rally practised in secret by those of better condition."

We were now at a little distance from the temple, returning towards the city, when a woman, whom I knew to be the mistress of the house where I lodged, passed quickly by us, as if afraid of being observed. Looking back a few moments after, I saw her sit down on one of the benches, and take from under her robe a garland of flowers, which she put on her head. "What you just now told me, said I to my companion, I have already seen confirmed by an instance very little expected." Informing him who the person was, I subjoined, that I thought both she
and

and her husband were in a situation not so favorable to the pleasures of gallantry: for that during each of the three nights I had slept at their house, they got out of bed together four or five times. “As the party-walls in the houses here, said I, are very slight, and have for the most part large crevices, I could hear their motions very distinctly”. “At those times, replied he, did you perceive any smell of incense come from their chamber?” “A very strong smell, said I, and which not a little surprised me”. At this answer he laughed heartily. “I find, said he, you are perfectly a stranger to the customs of this country. You must know it is

a practice religiously observed by the Babylonians, that, as often as the nuptial rites are performed, both parties immediately get out of bed, and fumigate themselves separately with incense *". On receiving this information I could not help laughing in my turn. "It appears to me very strange, said I, that the hallowed rites of marriage should be taxed with an expiation, from which illicit commerce at the temple, or in other places, is exempted." "Your observation is doubtless extremely just, said he; but there is no accounting rationally for customs which have had their origin in caprice."

* Herodotus.

This

This agreeable gentleman and I now parted, after a mutual promise to visit the market-place next day.

C H A P. IV.

AN EXTRAORDINARY OCCURENCE IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

IN the house where I lodged, fumigation went on this night as usual; but having now learned the cause from which it proceeded, it no longer excited my speculation; and I found, that, though the parties had been married almost a twelvemonth, they had not, by some accident, cohabited more than a fortnight. The gentleman with whom I had become

acquainted, called upon me next morning, and conducted me to the market-place, where we beheld a great number of objects, under circumstances very different from those we had seen the preceding day.

By a law which had prevailed throughout the Babylonish dominions from time immemorial, all such persons as had any distemper which did not confine them to bed, were placed in the most public part of the towns and villages, that they might receive the advice of those who, either from their own experience or from information, could prescribe any remedy for their complaints; the art of medicine having not as yet, in this country,

try, become the province of a particular profession. That a practice which humanity dictated might be enforced by example, custom had wisely annexed infamy to such as should pass by those unhappy persons without paying due attention to their several cases *.

We made the circuit of this spacious area with great deliberation; and I had the pleasure of doing service to some of the invalids. The Babylonians in general discovered an uncommon degree of sympathy, though with respect to one extraordinary case which occurred, they seemed deficient in their usual atten-

* Herodotus.

tion. But I was afterwards convinced that their behaviour proceeded from a mistake.

Amongst the diseased was a young man who, it must be owned, sat in an attitude which could not but appear strange to the spectators. The men who approached him seemed more inclined to laugh than to make any enquiry about his situation; and the women, for the most part, kept at a little distance; but I could perceive that many of them stole a glance as they passed. "Did you ever see such a thing in your life?" said one of them to her companion. "What an impudent fellow!" said another. "Why, that one might do for Semiramis,"

tamis", said a third. "It is my opinion that he has been flogged with nettles", said a fourth. "Why don't he go to the temple"? was the remark of a fifth.

Whilst I stood near him, I observed a man wink to some person behind me; and immediately the other answered, "I shall cool his courage". On my turning about, a young lad, who had a pitcher of water in his hand, was just preparing to empty it upon him; but I, perceiving his design, commanded him to desist. I was certain that the case of this person, however extraordinary, was really morbid, and that he meant no offence against decency. The gen-

tleman who was with me declared himself of the same opinion; and, as the best way of exciting due attention to the case, we proposed that a proclamation should be instantly issued. The expedient being approved by several others, the public cryer was sent for; and we hastily drew up a copy of what should be expressed on the occasion. It was in these days:

“ P R O C L A M A T I O N .

“ Whereas a man labouring under a priapism, or involuntary erection, meets not in the market-place with proper attention; it is requested that the men will assemble on the
east

east side of the obelisk, and the women on the west, to deliberate separately on his case. When they have maturely considered it, let each of the assemblies give a signal, by the sounding of a horn; and they will be immediately attended by two of the magistrates, to receive their respective opinions".

This proclamation was no sooner issued than the people divided into two bodies, and took their stations as directed. My curiosity prompted me most to listen to the deliberations of the women, but understanding that they waited the arrival of some matrons who had been sent for, I joined the assembly of the men.

I soon

I soon found that they were not satisfied with the word "involuntary". "I am far from being of opinion," said one of them, "that an erection ought to be accounted morbid, merely because it has not been produced by a previous exertion of the will; for I can affirm, that it has often been excited in myself without the consciousness of any volition; and I doubt not but all of you have frequently made the same observation". As they seemed to be unanimously of this opinion, I felt myself hurt at our not having expressed the meaning of the proclamation more precisely. But being a stranger, I left the explanation of it to the gentleman
whom

whom I have already often mentioned; and he, as might be expected from his good sense, was not slow to embrace the opportunity. "I now perceive," said he, "that the word 'involuntary' does not convey the sense which we intended to express. We meant to specify that kind of spasm which is accompanied with a desire of gratification: and it is our opinion that no such desire exists in the unfortunate man who is the object of the present deliberation".

The person who had spoken before, again addressed the assembly. "I do not think, for my part," said he, "that a desire of gratification universally accompanies such a state.

But

But I speak only from my own experience; and should be glad to know the opinion of other members on the subject: for it is necessary that this point should be fully established, before we can determine whether there is any thing uncommon in the present case". While he was delivering these sentiments, I could perceive that the majority of the assembly was influenced by his opinion; and there seemed reason to apprehend that the hope of a cure would be rendered abortive, merely from punctilious objections to the definition we had given of the disease. To obtain, therefore, if possible, some determinate criterion of the disorder, I ran
towards

towards the patient, who was still sitting in the market-place, and asked him whether he could mention any circumstance, in which his present turgescency differed from the common kind. "Alas! said he, I have much pain in it". "That is enough", I replied, and hastened back to the assembly, where I just arrived in time to prevent it from being dissolved. "I have this moment enquired of the patient, said I, whether his complaint be attended with any unusual symptom, and he informs me that it is accompanied with much pain. It can therefore be considered in no other light than a real disease".

Having

Having announced this fact, I went immediately to the other assembly, where the women had seated themselves on steps at the bottom of the obelisk, and were on the point of opening the consultation.

A woman of a respectable appearance, and who seemed to be between fifty and sixty years of age, was the first who delivered her sentiments.

“ I cannot pretend to know, said she, whether there be any thing particular in the case of this man ; but as to the method of cure, I think there can be no question about it. I have been married almost forty years ; in which time I have had four husbands ; and I declare, that in all my
experience,

experience, I never knew any one of them labor under such a complaint for five minutes at a time. I take it for granted that the man has not a wife, and that the want of such a convenience is the cause of his complaint”.

The next woman who spoke informed the audience that she had been three times married, and was entirely of the same opinion with respect to the cure, which she thought must be obvious to every person.

The sentiments expressed by the third who spoke related only to the nature of the complaint, which she
did

did not regard as any thing extraordinary. "I have had two husbands, said she, and am now a widow. I declare that the former of them continued in much the same state with this man for about three complete months after our marriage; and how long before I do not know." "But not without frequent intermissions?" said one of the women. "There may have been a few intermissions, replied she, but they were so short that I never was sensible of them". I observed the eyes of some young women sparkle at this declaration, but it seemed to meet with little credit from those of experience.

As

As no other woman showed any design of speaking, she who had begun the consultation now put the question, whether they were all agreed in the method of cure? "We know none but the natural way," was the general voice of the assembly. The horn was ordered to be sounded, and I returned with all speed to learn the proceedings of the men.

C H A P. V.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. A
HIGH DISPUTE BETWEEN THE
PRIESTS. THE EXTRAORDINARY
HUMANITY OF THE WOMEN. THE
PERSONS AND DRESS OF THE BA-
BYLONIANS.

JUST as I had reached the assem-
bly of the men, their horn was
also sounded; and I understood that
the method of cure which they pro-
posed, was entirely the same with
what had been suggested by the
females. Convinced as I had been
from the beginning, that the case was
unnatural, I never expected any be-
neficial effects from the ordinary
means.

means of allaying such a turgescency; though I could not be surpris'd at the general concurrence in a different opinion, when universal experience went in favor of the method of cure suggested, and no experience could yet be pleaded for the trial of any other remedy. But whatever might be the effects of the expedient proposed by both assemblies, it was interrupted by a dispute of a very extraordinary nature.

The news of the proclamation had in a moment spread over the city and suburbs, and the people flocked from all quarters to the market-place. Amongst those who assembled were the priest of Belus (the Jupiter of the Babylonians,) the priest of Venus,
 E 2 and

and several of the Magi or Chaldeans. The resolution of both the assemblies being intimated to the magistrates, one of the Chaldeans, who had originally been an Indian gymnosophist, and was educated in the strict principles of that sect, protested against the proceedings.

“ I am astonished, said he, to hear, that not only the men, but the women of Babylon should come to the resolution of suggesting a method of cure which is utterly subversive of morality. Can it be deemed a matter of little moment to tolerate, far less to recommend the trial of a practice, against which the inviolable laws of chastity are in the highest degree positive and explicit? I shudder at the
profligacy

profligacy which can dare to give even the most distant hint to a recourse so repugnant to purity and rectitude. No ! The diseases which Heaven may inflict upon us, let us cure, if we can, by such means as are compatible with moral duty ; but let us rather die than attempt to preserve life at the criminal expence of our virtue”.

The vehemence of this unexpected address, and the indignation with which it was delivered, diffused through the audience a general awe, and struck with confusion the men who had been the principal speakers in the assembly. There ensued a profound silence, which was at length

interrupted by the priest of Venus. He seemed to be a man about thirty, of a moderate stature, and fair complexion. His white robe was richly variegated with roses and myrtles. On his breast he wore a Cupid with a bow and arrow, wrought in gold. His turban was surrounded with a wreath of myrtle, and in his hand was a white rod, ornamented with the silver image of a dove.

“ I cannot, said he, behold, without expressing my severest reprehension, the unjustifiable attempt which has now been made, to throw reproach on the goddesses whom I serve. What! Shall we be told that the rites of Venus, those rites to which
men

men owe not only their existence but their dearest pleasures; shall we be audaciously told, I say, that those exquisite, those transcendent rites are criminal? It is an assertion totally contradicted by the customs of Babylon, and the universal practice of mankind. If any there really be who regard the laws of chastity as inviolable, let them, for aught I care, enjoy their ascetic virtue in its native frigidity, perpetual strangers to the soft desires, and the captivating joys of Venus; but let them not presume to throw the slightest reflexion on the most beneficent and adorable of all the heavenly powers".

At the conclusion of this speech the priest of Jupiter discovered evident symptoms of emotion. He was a man about middle life, of a majestic figure and aspect. His robe, which was also white, flamed with thunder-bolts of gold, intermixed with leaves of the oak. On his breast was a figure of the Ægis. A chaplet from the grove of Dodona encircled the fillet on his head; and the sacerdotal rod was decorated on the top with a golden Eagle. Addressing himself to the priest of Venus, he thus spoke.

“ Never before this day did such false, such indecent, and such profligate language proceed from the
mouth

mouth of any priest. You discover not only an ignorance, but an impiety, and a dissoluteness of sentiment, disgraceful beyond example to the sacred character in which you appear. Is decorum to be publicly insulted with a triumphant panegyric on "the soft desires, and the captivating joys of Venus"? Sir! you would make her a goddess not of soft, but of wild desires, and a goddess of strumpets. To magnify her divinity, you have had the blasphemous audaciousness to attempt the degradation of Jupiter; a deity superior to all the gods and goddesses that the earth ever produced".

"Venus was not produced in the
earth,

earth, but in the sea", said the other, with an air of sarcasm and triumph.

"In the sea! exclaimed the priest of Jupiter. Don't tell me of the sea. Her mother was, not a fish! Away with these effeminate airs, these contemptuous smiles of folly and insolence, more fit for a pandar than a priest".

"I wear the ensign of the myrtle, said the priest of Venus, and will not be treated with indignity by any pontiff that ever trod the temple of Belus".

"Mention not the temple of Belus, replied the priest of Jupiter. 'Tis a degree of profanation to be named by such lips as yours. I shall
make

make you to know your inferiority”.

“ I acknowledge no superior, said the other, and shall never yield precedence”.

“ But, by the supreme power whom I serve ! replied the priest of Jupiter, the myrtle shall yield to the thunder-bolt”.

Having spoken these words, he brandished his rod, and struck off the turban of the priest of Venus.

This altercation on the subject of dignity at length awakened the jealousy of the magistrates, who had hitherto remained mute spectators; and one of them now interfering, declared that the authority of the civil
power

power was absolute, and would admit of no encroachments from any order of men in the state. They recommended to both parties to refrain from violence; but expressed at the same time their disapprobation of the levity discovered by the priest of Venus, in praise of the goddess; whose divinity, they justly observed, if admitted to be supreme, would dissolve the most sacred compacts of society, and pave the way to unbounded licentiousness.

In consequence of the warm expostulation of the Chaldean, relative to the voice of the two assemblies, it was now resolved, that their opinion of the method of cure should be

be expressed in such a manner as to convey no implication which could be interpreted into an offence against morality. The opinion returned therefore was, that the assemblies know of no remedy for so extraordinary a case: leaving it entirely to the patient himself, to determine whether he should have recourse to the method ascertained to be universally successful in similar circumstances. But what the reserve of the magistrates forbore to suggest, the humanity of the women actually endeavored to enforce. Some of them, not only young and handsome, but persons of character, went successively to the unfortunate young man, and
made

made him a tender of their services. He returned them sincere thanks for their obliging condescension; but declared that he was not in a situation to accept of that proof of their sympathy. Nothing could afford stronger confirmation that his case was preternatural. How long it continued after this period, or in what manner it terminated, I never could learn.

The incidents of this day had given me an opportunity of seeing a greater number of the inhabitants collected than I otherwise should have had; and I own I was much struck with the solemnity of their appearance. Both the men and women

men seemed to be in general well made, and their countenances agreeable. Their dress consisted of two garments. The under one was of linen, and reached to their feet*: the upper was of wool †, but shorter. Over these, when they went abroad, they wore a white cloak ‡. On their feet they used sandals ||. Differing from the practice of some other nations in those times, they wore their hair, and upon their head a turban §. They all had on one of their fingers a ring, with a seal **. But what chiefly gave the men a noble appearance, they carried a baton or rod, on

* Herodotus.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

|| Ibid.

§ Ibid.

** Ibid.

the

the top of which was the figure of an apple, a rose, a lily, or some other device: for this ornament was considered as indispensable*. With those rods in their hands, especially when held upright, as I had seen them in the assembly, they appeared like a nation of monarchs.

* Herodotus.

C H A P. VI.

DESCRIPTION OF BABYLON. THE
 TEMPLE OF BELUS. THE HANG-
 ING-GARDENS. ANECDOTES OF
 SARDANAPALUS. THE OBELISK.

THE next object of my curiosity
 was to survey the buildings of
 this celebrated capital, which both
 in extent and magnificence surpassed
 all the cities I had ever seen. My
 pleasure in this employment was
 greatly increased by the agreeable
 company of the gentleman I had met
 at the temple; whom I found no less
 communicative than intelligent.

Babylon was situated in an immense plain, on both sides of the Euphrates. The shape of the city was a square, each side of which measured in length fifteen miles*; so that the outline of the whole amounted to sixty miles. It was enclosed with a ditch, or rather a canal, deep, broad, and full of water†. Within this was a brick wall, upwards of fifty feet thick, and more than two hundred in height; in which were a hundred gates, all of brass‡.

The whole of the space above mentioned however was not occupied with buildings. For between the wall and the houses, on every side,

* Herodotus.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

there

there extended an area, or, as it was called, a high way, two acres in breadth *; which, when deducted from the nominal extent of the city, greatly reduced the measurement.

Over the narrowest part of the river within the walls, was a bridge, thirty feet broad, and upwards of a mile in length, built by Semiramis, who also erected at each end of it a royal palace, decorated with turrets of vast height. In one of those palaces was a curious circular apartment, of great dimensions, furnished as a musæum. It contained the effigies of almost every species of animals, in their natural colours, manu-

* Diodorus Siculus.

factured in the manner of brick. Amongst them was a figure of Semiramis, in brass. She was mounted on horseback, in the attitude of shooting a panther with a lance. At a little distance, stood a similar representation of her husband, Ninus, darting a lion with the same weapon *.

In the middle of the city was erected the temple of Belus, or Jupiter. It was of a quadrangular form, the length of each side measuring a quarter of a mile †. In the centre was a tower of immense height, furnished on the out side with stairs, in which, at certain distances, were

* Diodorus Siculus.

† Herodotus.

seats,

seats, for the convenience of those who ascended *. In performing the journey, we took the benefit of them several times. I was told, that in one of them on which we sat, Semiramis had been seized with an abortion, about two years after the death of the king. Though she had got within a hundred yards of the top, she was obliged at that time to return; but she afterwards completed the expedition; and was probably the only woman in the world that ever ascended to such a height.

The summit of this tower was used as an observatory by the Chaldeans, or royal astronomers †; and

* Herodotus;

† Diodorus Siculus.

certainly never any place was so much adapted to the purpose. The extent of the prospect thence almost surpasses conception. Towards the north we could overlook the lofty mountains of Armenia, at the distance of several hundred miles. On the east, the horizon stretched almost to the extremity of India. Looking to the south, we perceived the ocean as if blended with the sky in the polar region. And on the west, the stupendous pyramids of Egypt were so much diminished as utterly to vanish from the sight. I may venture to affirm, that more than two-thirds of the heavens lay open to the eye; and I only wished for night, that we
might

might have seen the firmament in full splendor. The scene would have been glorious beyond imagination. But we had carried with us no provisions, and were therefore unprepared for enjoying that magnificent spectacle:

Situated as we were, on the verge of heaven, we seemed to be in company with the immortal powers. Here were three statues of gold, of admirable workmanship, representing Jupiter, Juno, and Rhæa. That of Jupiter was forty feet high, in the attitude of walking *. Rhæa sat upon a golden throne. On each side of her stood a lion; and, at a little

* Diodorus.

distance, two huge serpents of silver *. Juno, with her right hand, held a serpent by the head; and in her left a sceptre, which sparkled with gems †. The quantity of gold in those three statues exceeded the value of many a kingdom. Before them stood a table of solid gold, forty feet long, and seventeen broad ‡. On it were placed two cups of gold, weighing thirty talents; and three golden censers, amounting to three hundred talents ||.

The immense riches of the Babylonian princes is in nothing more conspicuous than in those magnificent works of gold, which, so far

* Diodorus. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. || Ibid.
from

from betraying ostentation, seemed rather to elude the human sight, by being thus placed in a situation rendered almost inaccessible by extreme altitude.

We next visited the celebrated retreat of the Babylonian kings, called, THE PENSILE, OR HANGING GARDENS. This wonderful structure was also quadrangular; each side forming a line of four acres in extent *. It stood upon rows of vast arches piled on each other; the height of the uppermost row exceeding seventy feet. It was ascended by steps on one side; and had on the top such a depth of earth as afforded, secure station and nou-

* Herodotus.

rishment

richment to trees of the largest size*. This paradise, as it was otherwise named, had been built by one of the kings of Babylon for the gratification of a mistress, who was a native of Persia, and wished to have a rural retreat that might resemble the scenes in her own country †.

To attempt a minute description of this extraordinary work, would lead me into too much prolixity; and I shall therefore give only a general account of it.

It was planted with the most beautiful trees and flowering shrubs which the world could afford, from the lofty cedar to the marygold, which grows

* Diodorus. † Ibid.

amongst

amongst the grafs. The scene was charmingly diversified with lawn and grove; with eminences rising in the gayest form of nature; and with verdant recesses, delightfully shaped into winding valleys. In the middle of the north side, was a rock two hundred yards high, supported on each hand by steep verdant banks, in the form of a semicircle, which were covered with trees of various kinds. From the top of the rock flowed a most beautiful cascade, continually supplied with water, by pipes communicating with the Euphrates*. The rock, in many parts, was indented with crystal; in others with

* Diodorus.

the ores of gold and silver; and, in some places, even with precious stones.

The brilliancy exhibited by the water, while the sun played upon those luminous objects, surpasses the power of the most vivid imagination to conceive.

From the bottom of the cascade issued a rivulet, which winded along the valleys, in some places gliding with the smoothest current, and in others in purling streams. Here sported the trout, and the golden fish, in great numbers; and during an hour which we spent in walking along the margin of this Celestial River, as it was called, I believe that no less than a hundred salmon also darted

darted themselves aloft out of the water.

In many parts of those gardens we started the hare: in others the dappled roe bounded along before us, as if exulting in its elevated situation. Herds of kids were browsing the herbage on steep eminences; and flocks of bleating lambs were frisking over all the flowry plain. Monkeys of various species, imported from the remotest parts of India, gamboled in antic gestures on the branches of many of the trees; and parrots, decked in the most beautiful colours, seemed to vie with each other, which of them should pronounce most clearly the name of this delightful retreat.

retreat. The word "paradise, paradise," resounded from every quarter.

In all my transmigrations never did I behold such a collection of beautiful birds as abounded in those gardens. Every climate of the earth had been ransacked to compose the the various assemblage. I counted upwards of a hundred and twenty different species; amongst which were many peacocks, remarkable both for the size and richness of their gorgeous train.

But the melody of the birds was yet more enchanting than their plumage. From every tree in the groves a thousand feathered songsters warbled notes of the sweetest modulation.

lation. The thrush, the linnet, the nightingale, every vocal inhabitant of the woods, poured forth its choral symphony in strains the most joyful and harmonious. The prodigious elevation of those gardens rendered them peculiarly adapted to the most exquisite enjoyment of such a concert. For they were removed from every noise of the creation, and the works of men. Were it possible that the human ear could vibrate to the music of the spheres, it must have been in the gardens I am speaking of.

Since the days of Adam, there certainly never existed any scene so much adapted to the luxurious gratification

tification of every sense. It was suited to captivate the most refined voluptuary that ever lived : and such was one of its former possessors, the unfortunate Sardanapalus. Of this dissolute and effeminate prince the gardens still retained some memorials. It was his daily practice to make his numerous concubines bathe in the Celestial River, while he, from the edge of the stream, regaled his sight with their naked charms. When they came out of the water, his business was constantly to wipe each of them dry with a towel. After this exercise, he generally retired with one of them to an adjoining arbor, called, The Paphian Bower. It consisted

sifted chiefly of myrtles brought from the island of Cyprus, intermixed with Jessamines, honeysuckles, and roses. On those occasions, the verdant turf was usually covered with a velvet carpet, which at this time hung in the temple of Venus, as an offering to that goddess. Whether from frequent use, or from contrivance, I know not, but the impression, as of a woman lying on her back, with her legs in the attitude of separation, was perceptible upon the grass.

Such was the mode of indulgence practised by Sardanapalus at the time when the natural appetite subsisted in a moderate degree of vigor. But too frequent repetition having dimi-

nished his enjoyment, he at last became fastidious in his pleasures, and courted the aid of fancy, to rouse the languor of sensation. When the embraces of women had become insipid, he endeavored to impose upon himself with the idea that the person he had in his arms was a female of a different species; a naiad or a dryad, a nymph of the water, or of the woods. When the former of those characters was his choice, one of his concubines went to the Celestial River, where stripping herself naked, she put on her head a garland of aquatic flowers, and round her waist a girdle of reeds. Thus equipped, she lay reclined on the brink of the stream.

The king seeing her in this situation, took hold of the supposed naiad, who affected to make a resistance; and after loosening her girdle, sated his passion with the ideal rape.

If a dryad was the object of his lascivious inclinations, the method was, that the concubine mounted a particular tree, where she lay upon a couch curiously wrought with twigs, and so firmly fixed to the large branches that there was not the smallest danger of its giving way. While she lay naked, with a garland of flowers on her head, and listening to the melody of the birds, the king suddenly mounts the tree; the beautiful nymph shrieks at being caught

in this situation by a man. The lover seizes the opportunity, and is happy in the enjoyment of a dryad.

I saw the tree which was the scene of this whimsical amour, and was told at the same time the following anecdote, which perfectly agrees with the character of this effeminate prince.

One day when the concubine had taken her station on the couch, and the king was just upon the point of accomplishing the concerted violence, an Indian monkey, which sat on an adjoining branch, came forward, and pushing away the monarch, took hold of the nymph while she lay on her back. With a facility doubly

doubly disgraceful to manhood, his imperial majesty leaped down from the tree, and left the beauteous nymph, unless she was pleased to extricate herself, a prey to the most contemptible of rivals.

However incredible it may appear, I was assured by several persons of the best information, that this ludicrous incident actually contributed to the downfall of the Assyrian monarchy. Indeed, that occurrences extremely frivolous have often produced most important effects, I am certain from repeated observation. It exposed the dastardly temper of Sardanapalus in the most striking light; and Arbactus justly concluded,

G 3

that

that the man who could relinquish his mistress in such circumstances, would not fight even in defence of a crown.

After descending from the hanging gardens, we went to take a view of the obelisk mentioned in a former chapter, and which was reputed one of the seven wonders of the world *. This enormous pile occupied about four acres of ground. The base was of a square form, with sixty rows of steps on each side. From the uppermost of those, it extended three hundred feet in height, and was encompassed at the top with a balustrade thirty feet high. Upon this solid base, stood the shaft of the obelisk,

* Herodotus.

which

which rose above the platform to the stupendous altitude of three thousand two hundred feet. Tradition related that the base of this obelisk was the tower of Babel, the completion of which had been suspended by the miraculous interposition of heaven. The work was resumed in consequence of a prophecy, communicated to the Babylonians by a person whose father had become delirious at the confusion of tongues. The prediction affirmed, that if the Babylonians should erect a mole three thousand six hundred feet high, their empire would last a century for every foot in the mensuration. It is probable that the prophet was deeply tainted with

his father's calamity. But be this as it may, one cannot help admiring both the industry and ambition of a people, who could execute such a structure as the obelisk, to secure the duration of their empire through a period of three hundred and sixty thousand years*.

Whilst we were surveying this wonderful object, I had occasion to see some Babylonians insulted by a Median soldier, concerning the cre-

* That the tower of Babel was really undertaken from such a motive as the author has mentioned, is confirmed by the following passage from holy writ. "And they said, go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth". Genesis, Chap. xi.

ver. 4.

dulity

idulity of their ancestors. Were
 not your fathers a parcel of fools,
 said he, to believe in the prediction
 of that false prophet? Why, it is the
 monarchy of the Medes, not of the
 Assyrians, that is to last three hun-
 dred and sixty thousand years. How,
 in the name of Jupiter, could your
 monarchy pretend to last. I would
 not give one farthing for all the
 princes that ever ye had. The great
 queen Semiramis, that ye speak so
 much of, was she not one of the most
 notorious whores that ever lived?
 One of your kings was such a mad-
 man that he lived seven years upon
 grafs. And what was the last of
 them, Sardanapalus, as you call him?

. He

He was a pretty fellow, to be sure. Just as he was on the point of boarding his mistress, he was drove away by a monkey, who kissed her for him. After all this, ye have the impudence to boast, forsooth, that ye must *proove* your women at the temple of Venus. I'll suffer to lose the best member I have, if Venus did not institute the practice in order that the women might *proove* you."

The raillery of this soldier was characteristic of his station. But whilst he laughed at the credulity of the Babylonians, he knew not that the application of the prophecy would prove yet more unsuitable to his own country. The empire of the Assyri-

ans

ans had subsisted a thousand and three hundred years*, whilst that of the Medes was destined to extinction at the end of three hundred and fifty †. It is only the fondness of national prejudice that can ascribe such immense longevity to the most durable institutions of mortals. Imperial dominion has always had, and ever will have its transigrations, as well as the human soul.

* Justin.

† Ibid.

the soldier whom we had seen at the
 obelisk. He had said that one of

CHAP. VII.
A SINGULAR NARRATIVE CONCERN-
ING AN ASSYRIAN KING. A CU-
RIOUS BALLAD. A TRAGICAL
INCIDENT.

A**F****T****E****R** surveying those amazing
 structures, I was invited to dine
 with my obliging conductor, who
 entertained me in the manner I al-
 ways preferred, with a hospitality
 which was elegant, but not luxurious.
 He was so well informed of every
 thing respecting the country, that,
 when the cloth was removed, I
 could not forbear making enquiry
 about a circumstance mentioned by
 the

the soldier whom we had seen at the obelisk. He had said that one of the kings of Babylon lived upon grass seven years. On my asking whether there could be any truth in this story, the governor (for that was the title of my host) replied, that nothing was more certain; and that it was the same king who had built the temple of Belus, and the Hanging-gardens. "Had he done it out of whim?" said I: or for what reason?" "He did it during a state of insanity", answered he; and proceeded to give me the following narrative. The name of the king was Nebuchadnezzar. He was a prince of an enterprising disposition, and, in the

life-

life-time of his father, had subjected
 the whole kingdom of Egypt to the
 Assyrian monarchy. He afterwards
 carried his victorious arms into Judea,
 and made himself master of Jerusa-
 lem, where stood a magnificent tem-
 ple, dedicated to the most High God.
 Having plundered the city, and rob-
 bed the temple of many of the gol-
 den vessels with which it was richly
 furnished, he returned in triumph to
 Babylon, and with the spoils of his
 conquests erected the superb struc-
 tures which we have been viewing.
 From the extraordinary success of
 his arms, and the magnificence of
 the works with which he had adorn-
 ed the capital, he became so much
 intoxicated

intoxicated with pride, that he not only exacted obedience to mandates incompatible with the limited nature of the human faculties, but even arrogated an uncontrollable authority over the consciences and religion of mankind. Having one night in his sleep had a strange dream, which he forgot next morning, he ordered all the Chaldeans to be summoned to the royal palace, and commanded them to inform him of his dream, and the interpretation of it. Their answer to this absurd requisition was such as might be expected. They declared in his presence, "There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter. It is a rare thing

thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh *".

At this reply, the frantic monarch burst into a furious passion, and vowed immediate destruction to the whole tribe of the Chaldeans. "As I live, said he, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dung-hill †". A decree for this purpose was actually issued to Arioch, the king's captain ‡; and had it not been for Belteshazzar, a Jewish youth, who resided at the court of Babylon, a universal massacre of the Chaldeans must that day have ensued.

* Daniel.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

This

This youth, with three others of the same nation, had been carried from Jerusalem to Babylon by the king, upon his late expedition. They were retained and educated in the royal palace, where they lived with such a degree of temperance as rendered them the admiration of the whole court. Though they attended to the study of the sciences which were taught by the Chaldeans, they adhered to their own religion, and worshipped the true God; by whom, as afterwards appeared, they were favored in the most miraculous manner.

Young Belteshazzar, alarmed at a decree in the execution of which the

ruin of himself and his three compa-
 nions would have been involved,
 went immediately to Arioch, and ex-
 postulated with him upon the ex-
 treme precipitancy of the royal edict;
 suggesting also a wish to have an au-
 dience of the king upon the subject.
 This being obtained, he requested
 that his majesty would give him a
 little time, and that he would not
 only tell the dream, but the inter-
 pretation of it. The king acqui-
 escing in the propofal, Belteshazzar
 hastened to his three companions,
 whom he entreated to join him in
 imploring the God of heaven con-
 cerning this secret, that they might
 not perish with the rest of the wise-
 men

men of Babylon. The dream was revealed to Belteshazzar that night; and next morning he fulfilled his promise, to the joy of the king, and likewise of the Chaldeans, whom by this wonderful act of providence he had saved from impending destruction. As a reward for so admirable a discovery, Belteshazzar, beside receiving many valuable presents from the king, was appointed ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the Chaldeans, or wise-men. He also procured, for his three companions, places of honor and emolument under the crown*.

* Daniel.

H 2

Though

Though the king's late dream was such as might have checked that inordinate pride, which seemed to extinguish every sentiment of moderation and piety, the violence of his temper soon afterwards broke forth into an act of capriciousness yet more outrageous than the former. * Having made an image of gold, the height of which was threescore cubits, and the breadth six cubits, he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the neighbourhood of Babylon, and ordered all the great men of the provinces to assemble, to the dedication of this idol. As soon as they were convened, a proclamation was announced by a herald, that, upon a

signal

the

signal

signal being made with musical instruments, they should all fall down, and worship the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and that whoever disobeyed this command, should be immediately cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace *. All the Assyrians conformed implicitly to the injunction. But some officious Chaldeans, with the view of displaying their zeal in promoting the king's pleasure, informed him that the three Jews, the companions of Belteshazzar (for he himself seems not to have been present,) had disobeyed the royal command. The king instantly gave

by a herald to Daniel.

Isaiah

H 3

orders

orders that they should be brought before him, to answer for their offence. On their coming into his presence, he interrogated them with respect to the truth of the accusation; repeating at the same time the denunciation of the horrible punishment which, in case of their non-conformity, they would immediately incur. “And who, added he, is that God that shall deliver you out of my hand?”*

The coolness, the intrepidity, the resolution, and the unshaken confidence in the protection of their God, displayed by those magnanimous youths on this dreadful occasion,

* Daniel.

are

are unexampled in the annals of human kind. Undismayed at the menaces of an implacable tyrant, they would neither fall down to his idol, nor deprecate his resentment. "O king, said they, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand. We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."*

Enraged at the boldness of this reply, he instantly commanded them to be bound, and cast into the burning fiery furnace. The order was no sooner issued than obeyed. They were cast into the midst of the flames,

* Daniel.

H 4

which

which burned with such fury as to destroy the man who had just put the sentence into execution.*

With a thirst of revenge, which even this catastrophe could not satiate, the unrelenting Nebuchadnezzar now approached the furnace, when to his astonishment, he beheld that his utmost violence had proved abortive. "Did not we, exclaimed he, cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" His counsellors answering in the affirmative, he again exclaimed, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the son of

* Daniel.

God".

God.* He then called upon them by name to come forth. They came accordingly: and to the amazement of all the spectators, the fire had not made the smallest impression either on their persons or their cloaths †. The king struck with this marvellous transaction, gave glory to the omnipotent Power by whom they had been protected; and enjoined, under a capital penalty, that no person should dare to blaspheme the God of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abed-nego ‡.

Notwithstanding this miraculous demonstration that there existed a Being superior to all human power,

* Daniel.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

still the impious pride of Nebuchadnezzar continued unabated. "I am lord of the world, said he, and where is the God to whom I will acknowledge subjection?" Equally blind to reason and to futurity, he knew not that in the hour of his exultation, the wheels of fate were rolling rapidly to hurl him from his throne. An intimation of this event was soon after given him in another dream, which was also interpreted by Belteshazzar; but no fore-warnings could affect the mind of this infatuated monarch. The dismal day at last arrived, which was to divest him of the splendor of royalty, and drive him from the habitations of men.

For

For seven years he lived a miserable vagrant in the fields, and ate grass as oxen.*

The singularity of this narrative struck me with amazement. “Unhappy man! exclaimed I; what became of him afterwards?” The governor, resuming the discourse, informed me, that at the end of seven years Nebuchadnezzar’s understanding returned. “He again mounted the throne, and held the reins of government, with general esteem, to the end of his life. The severe chastisement he had experienced, wrought a total change in his sentiments and behaviour. He became as much

* Daniel.

distin-

distinguished for humility as he had formerly been for arrogance and pride. Upon the same spot, in the hanging-gardens, where now stands the Paphian Bower, he erected a temple to the most high God, in which, ten times a day he fervently paid his devotions. He had it in contemplation to abolish idolatry throughout his dominions; and it is generally believed, that to prevent such a revolution, he fell a sacrifice to the clandestine revenge of the pagan priesthood. It was his dying request, that the golden statues on the tower of Belus should be melted down, and sent back, with a solemn embassy, to the temple at Jerusalem."

The

The governor now paused, and, rising from his seat, went to an adjoining closet, from which he brought something in his hand. Holding it out to me, "What, said he, do you imagine this is?" "Why answered I, it seems to be an eagle's feather." "It certainly has that appearance, replied he; but it is one of the hairs which was cut off Nebuchadnezzar's head, on his return to the palace*. And what is this?" said he, showing me some thing else. "I should take it to be one of the claws of the same bird," answered I. "It is, replied he, one of the unfortunate king's nails, which were pared at the same time."†

* Daniel.

† Ibid.

After

After expressing my astonishment at the whole of this detail, I observed to my sensible host, that had it not been for the Median soldier, I might have remained ignorant of some of the most curious historical anecdotes any where to be found. "I think, said the governor smiling, he also mentioned our queen Semiramis. I can show you a curiosity, relative to her, which I believe will afford you more pleasure than the objects we have been viewing. It is a satirical ballad, mentioning all the principal incidents of Semiramis's life. I will venture to affirm that it is the oldest ballad in the world, both as a composition and a manuscript; for

for it is in the hand writing of the author, who lived about fifteen hundred years ago."

A B A L L A D.

The first Queen in the world, without all compare,
Was Ninus's consort, the fairest of fair.
Her name was Semiramis, famous of yore,
For beauty, and equally famous for more.
To keep pow'r in her hands on the death of the king,
She did what was surely a notable thing:
Assuming man's habit, she in that disguise,
Made the people believe 'twas her son blest'd their
eyes*.

In valor supreme, as in art and in charms,
She carry'd to India her conqu'ring arms;
She made gardens on Bagistan's top near the sky,
Where the mount was environ'd with stones two
miles high†.

For mounting, when widow as well as when wife,
Dear mounting was always the joy of her life;
And that she might never by babblers be trick'd,
Her rule was, that those who had stick'd her she
stick'd‡.

* Diodorus.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

“ Tell

“ Tell me now, said the governor, what you think of this composition”.

“ I think, said I laughing heartily, it is an admirable production, to be so many hundred years old; and the author has happily availed himself of the equivocal meaning of the word *stick'd*, in the Assyrian language.”

“ This ballad, resumed he, was written by one of my ancestors, concerning whom I must give you the following anecdote. When the verses had by some means or other come to the knowledge of Semiramis, she sent for the author, who obeyed the summons with that apprehension which was natural to a subject, who had given cause of offence to a des-
 potic

potic sovereign. At entering the
 apartment where she sat, he fell upon
 his knees, and implored her forgive-
 ness. With a voice and countenance
 which indicated the most gracious
 disposition, she desired he would get
 up; declaring that she had not sent
 for him from any motive of resent-
 ment, but only to assure him, that,
 with respect to what was mentioned
 in the last couplet of the ballad, he
 had been greatly misinformed. She
 intimated to him at the same time,
 that for this little specimen of poetical
 genius, he might expect to be taken
 under her protection. The conse-
 quence was, that in two days
 she bestowed upon him a beautiful

tract of land, with an elegant mansion, on the banks of the Euphrates. This unexpected generosity so much excited the admiration of the poet, that he soon after presented her with a copy of verses, which I must also show you."

Just as the governor had risen to fetch the verses, we were interrupted by a tragical incident. It seemed that ever since the dispute between the priests about the affair at the obelisk, the priest of Venus had entertained a design of revenging the insult which he had publicly received from the priest of Belus. But not daring to make an open attack, he had that moment basely assassinated
his

his antagonist by a wound in the back with a spear. As the perpetrator of this murder was of the pontifical order, could he have reached the temple of Venus, he would, by the laws of Assyria, have been protected from punishment. But several persons having seen the transaction, and the character of the priest of Belus being universally esteemed, as much as that of the other was held in contempt, whilst the assassin took to flight with the view of reaching the sanctuary, he was pursued, and made prisoner by the spectators. The governor being one of the chief rulers in the city as well as in the province, the delinquent was brought before him,

to undergo an examination, and receive a commitment to the public jail, until he might be brought to a trial. I therefore now took leave of my valuable host for this day.

C H A P. VIII.

A STRANGE IMPOSTURE PRACTISED
ON A GENTLEMAN AND HIS
WIFE.

THE late dispute between the priests continued to be for several days the subject of much conversation; but to me it was not a novelty. Both in my present life, and in former transmigrations, I had seen many instances of dissention
amongst

amongst priests of different orders. It was an evil which naturally arose wherever Polytheism prevailed. For, as the emoluments of a priest, and the respect in which he was held, depended upon the degree of adoration paid to the idol which he served, he was excited by motives both of interest and ambition to magnify the importance of his own particular deity. One instance of this kind was remarkable.

A gentleman of great fortune having been married two years to a handsome young lady, without any prospect of issue, they were extremely desirous to have a child. On this account they had sacrificed, during a

whole twelvemonth, to Juno, but without any effect. A priest belonging to the temple of Lucina or Diana, hearing of the affair, took an opportunity to wait on the parties, and informed them, that the proper way to obtain their request was to apply to the goddess whom he served; for, unless she granted her assistance, the hope of progeny would be vain. Whilst therefore the sacrifices to Juno were continued as usual, oblations were also instituted to Diana, accompanied with handsome gratuities to the priests of both the goddesses; but still without any effect.

These transactions becoming soon after known to the priest of Venus,
he

he resolved to turn the credulity of the gentleman and lady, if possible, to his own advantage. With this view he came one day to their house; and expressing the utmost regret at having heard that they had thrown away so many offerings to Juno and Diana, assured them that Venus was the only deity whom they ought to invoke. “ Nothing can be more certain, said he. It is impossible that a work of such a nature should ever succeed, except under the auspices of Venus. Be therefore persuaded by me: dismiss the priests of Juno and Diana, who have too long amused you with vain promises, and have recourse to my goddess. I will

stake my veracity upon your success,"

In consequence of these assurances his admonition was adopted; and the two former channels of application being shut up, the whole current of oblations and gratuities now flowed to the temple and the priest of Venus.

In the mean time the two discarded priests, exasperated at the success of the new intruder, and farther provoked by their own exclusion, determined on revenge. For this purpose they way-laid him, as he was one evening coming home from the temple with a single attendant. A smart scuffle ensued; and had not the assailants

assailants, on the appearance of a party of men coming up behind, been obliged to take to flight, it is probable that the obnoxious priest must have fallen a sacrifice to their resentment.

I shall now mention what followed, in regard to the affair of the oblations. As often as Venus was invoked, and gratuities were bestowed upon the priest, assurances, of success were repeated. "Proceed, would he say, proceed. I had last night an auricular communication with the goddess on the subject, and she has positively declared that she will be propitious. Nothing more is necessary than to proceed for a little time."

It

It was currently surmised, that the priest had pressed the acceptance of his services in more than his pontifical function. But whatever truth might be in this report, it is certain that the rites of Venus were continually performing; every day upon the altar, every night upon the couch. Whilst the priest was fattening with the gifts, the husband declined in the same proportion; and at last, I really believe, fell a victim to his own solicitude.

The lady remained not long a widow; and upon her second marriage, the several priests did not fail to renew their applications. But her new husband could not so easily be rendered

dered the dupe of superstition. "With respect to Juno, said he to the priests, we have already sacrificed at the marriage. It seems to me very absurd to think of invoking the assistance of Lucina before there be any signs of pregnancy. And as to Venus, it is firmly my opinion, that I cannot gratify her more than by performing her rites as I ought; which I am determined to do." The lady, who seemed much pleased with this declaration, acquiesced in all the husband had said; and the priests could obtain no farther satisfaction than a promise, that they should be applied to as soon as their services were thought necessary.

C H A P.

C H A P. IX.

ACCOUNT OF THE SACÆ.

I Was now impatient to see the College of the Chaldeans, which the Governor and I were to visit on our next excursion. But the Sacæ commencing next day, this pleasure was necessarily suspended.

The Sacæ was an annual festival of five days, during which the masters all over the kingdom resigned to their slaves the entire administration of their families *. If more than one slave resided in a house, the reins

* Athenæus.

of this temporary government were for the most part held by seniority. The slave thus dignified wore the Zogana,* a white garment bordered with purple, and resembling the royal robe.

On the first morning of this festival, the slaves universally testified the most intemperate exultation; and it is incredible to what a degree some of them could throw off the habitual respect of their masters. The custom of the country now indulged them in uncontrolled licentiousness; and they were determined that the slavery of a year should be as much as possible compensated by the unlimited use of

* Athenæus.

freedom.

freedom. The behaviour of all, however, was not the same; but was diversified in individuals according to their own natural temper, and the treatment they had received from their masters. If in the exercise of authority during the five days, any of them should by their insolence provoke their masters resentment, they could only be punished with a flogging at the expiration of the festival; and even this they might escape by flying to another part of the country. Some of them therefore indulged their caprice, in commanding their masters to perform the meanest offices.

A daily employment was that of
washing

washing their feet in the morning, if not oftener in the day ; and anointing their bodies with oil, which was the practice of the country.* The putting on, and tying of their sandals was another common occupation, as was also the combing of their hair. Sometimes they would order their master to fan them, either in the principal apartment of the house, or in any other place where they chose it to be done. They would next command him to fetch water, sometimes for washing their hands, at other times for cooling them, but always from the motive of displaying their present superiority.

* Herodotus.

All those domestic offices, though practised in private, afforded the slave great pleasure; but his vanity was chiefly gratified when the master was obliged to show his obsequiousness, either abroad, or at home in the presence of company. For this purpose, the slave would every day pass through the most public places, in the family-chariot, if there was one; or, if not, upon foot. If in the vehicle, the master stood behind, holding over the slave an umbrella; but when on foot, the master was obliged to walk at a little distance before him, crying out, "clear the way for my lord." On those occasions, if he either pronounced the words in
a manner

a manner the least ironical, or if it was suspected that he made wry faces to those he met in passing along, the consequence might be a stroke immediately with the rod, accompanied with, "You scoundrel, I shall teach you how to behave," or some other words to that purpose.

In Babylon, the place which the slaves generally chose for the display of their superiority, was the high roads which stretched along the banks of the Euphrates. I was there one day when a slave was riding in a chariot in the manner above described. Some watermen who were plying on the river, cried out to the master, "What a fool you was to re-

sign your authority in that manner ! Don't you think so, master ? Ah, you'll make him smart for this when the five days are expired."

During the whole of this festival the master's house was open to all whom the slaves chose to invite. Every apartment was occupied with guests ; every table was continually crowded with persons of the lowest rank. Nothing but the most delicate viands could now satisfy them ; and palm-wine flowed in profusion. It was computed that in some houses, the expence of this annual riot amounted to more than the ordinary charge of the family in six months.

What

What must, one should think, have rendered this scene peculiarly disagreeable to the master, he was not always admitted to partake of the entertainment which he lavishly supplied, and perhaps had dressed with his own hands. For often the slave, to show his own authority in the presence of the visitants, would oblige him to remain in the kitchen turning a spit all the time. At a house where I dined one day from curiosity, the master came into the apartment, carrying in his hand a roasted boar, which had been sent him from Armenia. The slave, knowing him to be particularly fond of that dish, declared that he must not expect to taste one

bit of it; because now was the time for him to learn abstinence. "Abstinence!" exclaimed the master, "Abstinence! am I to be starved in my own house in this manner? I have both killed and roasted this boar with my own hands, and it is but reasonable that I should partake of it." Struck with sympathy, I took the liberty to say, "Indeed it is very proper that you should." At these words the slave expressed much passion. "Sir! said he to me in a peremptory tone, I am master of this house at present, and my will shall be obeyed." Looking at his master with an imperious air, "I desire, said he, that you will go down to the kitchen.

kitchen. You shall neither eat of the boar, nor any thing else in my presence. Have patience till we have dined." But the master, whose appetite was set upon the boar, snatched up a bit of it with a fork, and ran out of the room. The slave, starting from the table, pursued him. The master, in his hurry, fell upon the stairs. His garment was pushed up above his navel; and in this attitude he slid down, to the no small entertainment of some women, who were standing at the bottom.

A little after this incident the master was commanded to come up stairs. On his entering the room, "Go, said the slave, and bring us

half a dozen of girls this moment. I have invited some, but I don't expect them before night." The insulted master so far asserted his dignity as to reply, "If you want girls, you may go to the temple and find them; for by Belus! I never shall be a pimp to the first man in Babylon. Having spoken these words he departed, but he had hardly got down stairs when he was obliged to return, and introduce about a dozen of girls, who had come to visit the lord of the house; for this was now the usual title of the slave.

When they entered the apartment the girl who was foremost accosted him. "You see, said she, I have brought
you

you a good deal of company." "My jewel ! exclaimed he running towards her, you are the most charming girl in the world. By heaven, one hour of such a day is worth a whole age of common life. Now for a joyous night !" After kissing the girls all round, and seating them upon chairs, he opened the door, and cried to the master, " Send me up this moment some of the best wine in the house, and prepare for dressing a sumptuous supper." Receiving no answer immediately, he called out with a stern voice, " Do you hear ?" The master replied in a tone of involuntary compliance, " Yes, yes." I heard him subjoin, though not so audibly, " A

A few days will put an end to this work."

The institution of the *Sacæ*, from what I could learn, had its origin in the condescension of the masters, who universally agreed to grant their slaves an annual respite of five days from the rigors of servitude. But the illiberal nature of slaves could not always support so great an indulgence with moderation. Intoxicated with the temporary emancipation, they often gave way to extreme licentiousness. The festival, from the beginning to the end, was one continued scene of riot and intemperance, sanctioned by general custom. It was a wild inversion of the order of society; and instead

stead of teaching the masters an abstinent use of despotic authority, served only to encourage in the slaves the most extravagant abuse of it.

C H A P. X.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONS OF BABYLON. THE KING. AN EXTRAORDINARY FUNERAL.

ON account of the confusion which prevailed in Babylon during the festival of the Sacæ, I took this opportunity of surveying the environs, where nature and art conspired to render the country suitable

able to the great metropolis. From the hundred brazen gates, high roads led through the provinces, on all sides, to the extremity of the empire. Canals of great extent, cut across the immense plain, conveyed water from the Euphrates westward to the borders of Syria, and eastward almost to the Tigris*. This was one of the works of Nebuchadnezzar, who, amidst the many blemishes of his character, had doubtless the merit of having greatly promoted the interest, as well as the glory of the empire.

The fertility of the soil was so much encreased by these canals, that the land generally yielded two hun-

* Herodotus.

dred fold *. Commerce flowed incessantly through all those channels of communication, not by small boats only, but by vessels of great burden †. An appearance of cheerfulness, distinct from what might be supposed to arise from the Sacæ, was every where conspicuous. But I imputed it in great measure to the gratification at the temples of Venus, which were numerous over the country ; for, though provisions were extremely plentiful, the Median government was far from being indulgent to the natives.

The natural productions of Assyria were confined to a few species, but this

* Herodotus. † Ibid.

was compensated by the variety which might be obtained from them with very little labor. The palm-tree, which was common in every part of the country, yielded food, wine, and honey*. The quantity of the last article, over the kingdom, must have been prodigious; for it was universally used in the burying of the dead †.

Bitumen was in great plenty, and also served different purposes. It not only afforded brick for building, but was the fuel commonly used by the inhabitants;‡ and to answer the great consumption, nature was constantly generating fresh supplies in

* Herodotus.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

the earth *. This substance, being of a slimy or adhesive quality, might easily be moulded into any form ; and when dried, either by the sun or the fire, acquired a hardness which rendered it susceptible of equal duration with stone. It had been owing to the vast quantity of bitumen, that the Babylonians were enabled to erect such amazing structures, and were also so remarkable for their proficiency in the plastic art. It was a frequent diversion amongst the children to work this earth into the shape of various animals, which they imitated with surprising dexterity. But the sulphureous smell which it com-

* Herodotus.

municated

municated when wet, was at first offensive to a stranger.

It was a singular circumstance in the kingdom of Assyria, that, notwithstanding its great extent, the vast towers of Babylon were seen conspicuous from every quarter.

In the province of Dura, I saw the furnace into which the three Jewish youths were cast, at the command of Nebuchadnezzar. It was at this time used as an oven, in preparing bread for the army, which often encamped in the neighbourhood. Not far from the same place, I was shown a small hollow spot, under the shelter of an old palm-tree, where it was
said

said that Nebuchadnezzar had often lain during the time of his calamity.

In the survey which I had taken of the environs of Babylon, the fertility of its territories excited my admiration, but I was not captivated with its beauty. I had always been fond of the purling stream, the varied grove, and the vocal hill; but here the waters flowed only in rivers of a vast expanse; the palm excepted, there was not in the whole nation (I speak not of the HANGING GARDENS) a single tree to be seen;* and so much was an echo unknown in the country, that the language, as I

* Herodotus.

learned

learned upon enquiry, afforded no word for that idea. The climate, beside, being hardly ever refreshed with rain,* the air was perpetually sultry; and its intemperature was encreased by the bituminous exhalations, especially in the neighbourhood of Babylon.

On my return towards the city, I had the pleasure to meet with the king who, though Media was now the seat of empire, frequently held his court at Babylon. He was a man at this time between forty and fifty, of a good appearance. He rode in a chariot with three horses a-breast; and on his left hand sat the Queen,

* Herodotus.

for whom he had a particular affection. She was the daughter of a gentleman of small fortune within thirty miles of the city. The king, who, some years before, used frequently to make excursions into the country in disguise, had met with her by accident at the temple of Venus, on the day when she went to make the usual sacrifice of her virginity. He became her paramour on that occasion, and afterwards married her.

The time when I met him was the last day of the Sacæ, when many of the inhabitants were going along the high road, celebrating the festival according to custom. He seemed

to be much entertained at beholding the slaves dressed in the Zogana. It is probable that the sight of so great a number of persons, exulting in the exercise of their narrow and temporary despotism, excited in his mind a more lively consciousness of the value of that superior authority, which was both perpetual and unlimited. But it might at the same time give him a contempt of the ignoble power which is exerted only in the indulgence of caprice, and the destruction of social happiness. When I had come almost opposite to his majesty, I stopped my horse, and made a profound bow, which he returned in a very gracious manner.

I entered

I entered the city by one of the brazen gates on the west side, and thence took the shortest road to the street in which my lodgings were situated. In passing along, there appeared a great concourse of people, who I found upon enquiry, had assembled to behold the funeral of the priest of Belus. Being desirous of viewing the ceremony, I dismounted, and gave my horse to one of my servants. The present general disregard of good order rendered the multitude so unruly that it was impossible to obtain any secure station upon the street; but by putting a piece of gold into the hand of one of those who were dressed in the

Zogana, I was accommodated with a place in the window of an apartment on the first floor, where I might have an advantageous view of the whole procession.

On this solemn occasion, the priests of every order, within many miles of Babylon, were assembled. They were dressed in their richest pontifical robes, and marched in different divisions; each class being preceded by an officer carrying the ensign of its order. The procession began from the house of the deceased, and ended at the burial ground belonging to that quarter of the city. In the front marched the slaves of the deceased, clad in black garments, with their hair

hair dishevelled, and pouring forth a lamentable cry. With the left hand they beat their breasts, and in the right they carried rods, to the heads of which was fastened a branch of the cypress-tree. These were succeeded by a band of musicians, in the same habit, playing melancholy airs upon a variety of instruments, amongst which I observed the flute, the harp, the timbrel, and the dulcimer. Behind the musicians, the corpse, in a plain coffin made of the palm-tree, was carried by six men, all likewise in black, and their hair dishevelled.

The procession hitherto described was common to all the Babylonian funerals, but the subsequent part, I

was informed, had never been exhibited with near so much solemnity as on the present extraordinary occasion.

At a little distance behind the corpse, marched the priests of Belus, or Jupiter, preceded by their standard-bearer, who carried in his hand a long rod, on the top of which was a large figure of an Eagle, with a leaf of oak in its mouth. They walked three in a rank, according to seniority, and were all dressed in the habit of the priests of Belus, formerly described. Their step was venerably solemn, and they beat their breasts with an air of real lamentation.

After another band of music the
priests

priests of Juno next advanced. They were arrayed in white garments, gorgeously decorated with the tail of the peacock ; the figure of which bird was also carried before them by their standard-bearer. They marched in the same manner with the preceding class, which they resembled both in the dignity of their gait, and the apparent sincerity of condolence.

A third band of music separated this class from the priests of Venus, who were the most numerous body in the procession. The ensign of this order was the Cestus of the goddess, which they appeared to view with great complacency ; and their habit was the same with what has been

mentioned in a preceding chapter. Whether owing to the dispute which had occasioned the present funeral, I know not, but I could not help remarking that the behaviour of this class was extremely indecent. An air of levity, mixed with lasciviousness, appeared in the whole of their deportment. Their countenances had more the aspect of smothered exultation than of sorrow. They walked with a mincing step, as if eager to betray a disregard of the common forms of decorum. And they performed the ceremony of beating the breast, in the manner of a lover, when he pats the bosom of his mistress. In short their conduct
afforded

afforded general disgust, and in many excited indignation. Even the haughty lords of the Zogana, who had trampled on all the laws of public decency, revolted at the sight of men that could dare to cast mockery on the sacred obsequies of the dead. At a sacrifice in a grove of Idalia, during the performance of a hymn to Venus, I once saw the priests jig with meretricious airs to the soft music of the Lydian flute; but their levity was afterwards repaid by the votaries with a hearty flogging; and I am certain that in the present case, they were much more entitled to the same retribution.

The procession was closed by another

ther class of priests, of which there was a greater number in Babylon than in any other country. This was probably owing to the universal demand for molten images amongst the Assyrians. The priests I speak of were those of Vulcan. From the oddness of their appearance, and from the close connexion which subsisted between their patron and Venus, I began to suspect that a plan had been concerted by the priests of both to throw ridicule on the solemnity; but this, I afterwards found, was not the case. The ensign which preceded this order was an anvil, carried upon the top of a long pole, by a man who in his figure perfectly resembled

sembled a Cyclops. He had also only one eye, but not under the middle of his forehead.

The priests, of whom the number was about twenty, were dressed in flame-coloured robes, on which were represented the hammer, the bellows, and other utensils of the Cyclopiæan art, interspersed with the usual objects of its employment. These were, thunderbolts, winds, clouds of rain, the Ægis, the chariot-wheels of Mars, the Gorgon's head, and the whole armour of Pallas. In the form of their persons, several of these priests bore a great affinity to their standard-bearer. I observed a Brontes, a Steropes, and a Pyracmon. But
what

what most surprised me was, that in walking, they all had the limp of the Lemnian god. I imputed this to an affectation in honor of their deity; and upon enquiry, my conjecture was verified. Among them however were two priests who had been subject to lameness from their infancy; and one of these had also the misfortune to resemble his patron in another circumstance. He had caught an officer of the Median army in the act of adultery with his wife. But he was not satisfied, like Vulcan, with exposing the parties to ridicule; for with a knife which he used at the sacrifices, he instantly dismembered the warrior. I ought to have mentioned,

tioned, that over the anvil carried by the standard-bearer of this class, there was a Salamander. On my asking the reason of this emblem, I was told it had been assumed upon a current report that a Salamander could live in the midst of fire.

The habit of all the priests at this solemnity, was the same which they usually wore, with the addition only of a sprig of the cypress-tree in their turbans. On the whole, it was the most singular kind of funeral I had ever seen, and would long be remembered in Babylon.

C H A P. XI.

THE COLLEGE OF THE CHALDEANS.

THE festival of the Sacæ being finished, we visited the College of the Chaldeans, which was situated on the east side of the Euphrates a little way from the bridge. It was a large building, consisting of four quadrangular courts, respectively appropriated to the different sects into which the Chaldeans were divided. These were the Hhar-tumim, Ashaphim, Chasdim, and Mecashphim.*

* Herodotus.

We

We went first into the apartments of the Ashaphim, or those who cultivated Theology. Being desirous to know the opinion of the Chaldeans on this important subject, I entered into conversation with one who was reputed a person of the deepest knowledge among them. “ Pray, said I, do not the Chaldeans maintain the existence of one supreme Power?” “ Most certainly, replied he, and that supreme and eternal Power is light.”* “ I presume, said I, you do not admit a plurality of gods.” “ Yes, answered he, Zoroaster, the founder of our religion, has taught that there is a plurality of created gods, who

* Porph. Vit. Pythag.

are

are all however subordinate to the Great Eternal Power.”* “On what account do you suppose a plurality?” said I. Such a doctrine seems not necessary for explaining the government of the universe.” “If you think so, replied he, we differ totally in opinion. Can we imagine that the Supreme Power is to be at the trouble of directing all the operations of the universe, without the assistance of inferior agents?” “It seems to me, said I, as if you estimated the infinite perfections of the Eternal Being by the limited capacities of mankind”. “We have formed our system upon analogy,” answered he.

* Porph. Vit. Pythag.

“Analogy,

“Analogy, when well founded and applicable, said I, is doubtless a useful principle in many speculative enquiries; but I very much question, whether there can exist any real analogy between the nature of the Supreme Power and that of any created being.” To this I received no other answer than a smile of disapprobation, accompanied with a nod of the head. He had entrenched himself within the pale of analogy, and was not to be driven from it. I then changed the conversation, and looking at a figure of Zoroaster, which stood in the hall, I said, by way of compliment, that Zoroaster had been an ingenious man. “Yes, answer-

ed he, Zoroaster was the greatest man that ever lived." After a little more conversation, of a trifling nature, we took our leave of the Ashaphim.

We next visited the Chasdim, or the College of Astrologers, where I also had a conversation with one of the most eminent professors. I had always considered this as a chimerical science, and from the result of my present enquiry I was confirmed in the opinion. "I believe, said I to the astrologer, that the grand principle of your science relates to a knowledge of the sign under which any particular person is born?" "You are perfectly right, Sir," replied he. "I cannot conceive, said I, what ne-
fary

cessary connexion there should subsist between the disposition or fortune of any man and the sign of his nativity."

"Oh, there is nothing more certain," answered he. I shall demonstrate it by an example. Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo. We shall go no farther. We shall take Aries. Now, suppose a man is born under Aries. Let us consider the principles of things. Well, what is Aries? Why, I say Aries is a ram. That is one step gained. Aries is a ram. Now what is a ram, in an astrological sense? for we must proceed scientifically. This is a question of the utmost importance; and upon the right solution of it the whole of our discoveries must de-

pend. I say again, what is a ram, in an astrological sense? now mark me. A ram is the leader and defender of the flock. I say, he is the leader and defender of the flock. Do you see that? now we shall come to the point. I say then, as Aries is a ram, and a ram is the leader and defender of the flock; now mark me, a king who is born under Aries is destined to make a great prince. Do you see that? I say, he is destined to make a great prince. His government will never be overturned either by foreign or domestic foes. Now, here is a conclusion regularly and fairly deduced, upon the principles of astrology; and I defy all the wise-
men

men in Babylon to find one flaw in the whole of this syllogistical, astrological, trismegistical process. That, you will say, is a bold declaration."

He now paused, and looked with an air of great importance. "You seem to be extremely conversant with mystical science, said I; but permit me to ask you one question. Upon the same principle with the conclusion which you have drawn, is there not reason to apprehend that a woman born under the sign of Aries would be inclined to assume the government over her husband?" "Good, answered he; your remark is perfectly just, provided that none

of the constellations, particularly Virgo, be adverse. That is the point. And now that I think of it, such a woman is also exposed to another danger from the celestial influence." "What is that?" said I. "Why, replied he, to the danger of being tuped."

At the simplicity with which this answer was delivered, the governor burst into a fit of laughing, in which I joined. The astrologer was now proceeding to examine whether Virgo was adverse, when I, apprehensive lest we should be detained the whole day amidst the constellations, to no purpose, changed the subject, by asking whether the Chaldeans kept any journal

journal of extraordinary appearances in the firmament. He replied that they did; and to satisfy my curiosity, brought a large book, in which many of those observations were registered. On examining several parts of the book, I found an account of some comets, and visible eclipses; but what afforded me most satisfaction, were two miraculous occurrences, which I knew had been observed in another country. One of these was, that, at a time specified in the Journal, the sun had stood still about a whole day; and the other, that in a subsequent period, he had gone ten degrees back upon the dial in the college.

That the Chaldeans were diligent observers of the planets and stars, there can be no question. Almost the whole life-time of the Chaldeans was devoted to this purpose. But, with all their observations, I am certain that they never attained any accurate knowledge of astronomy. Whilst I was examining this subject, I spoke with several members of the college. They alledged extremely weak reasons for the eclipses of the sun; and none of them could foretel, or reduce to any certain periods, the returns of those phenomena*. Aristotle afterwards, I know, entertained a different opi-

* Diodorus.

nion; but I convinced him of his mistake.

C H A P. XII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

JUST as we were quitting the Chasdim, a message was brought from the king, desiring the attendance of the governor immediately at the royal palace. Of all the counsellors of state, he enjoyed the greatest share of his majesty's confidence; and certainly never any minister deserved more the esteem of his sovereign. His political knowledge was extensive; his integrity was universally the subject of praise; and he was
endowed

endowed with all those virtues, public and private, which reflect a lustre on the character of that prince by whom they are honored and admired. I therefore visited the next department of the college under the guidance of a member of the Chafdim; for the chief of the Chaldeans, who might otherwise have favored me with his company, was at present in an infirm state of health.

I next entered the Hhartumim, which was appropriated to the various kinds of divination, exclusive of astrology. Here lived those Chaldeans whose province it was to foretel future events by augury or the flight of birds, and by inspection
into

into the entrails of sacrificed animals. Here also were the interpreters of dreams, and the expounders of prodigies. In regard to augury and the inspection of entrails, I had been sufficiently acquainted with them during a former transmigration in Hetruria; and I can affirm from experience that they were nothing else than political frauds. Nay I myself, when a prince in that country, had practised them with much success. In those ignorant and superstitious times, there was no way of working so powerfully upon the minds of men as by the intervention of omens. The territory which I possessed in Hetruria was beautifully situated, and I was envied
by

by three neighbouring princes, who formed a confederacy against me. My only ally was a prince of a small district, whom, being under great apprehension from the superiority of our enemies, I had the utmost difficulty to retain. Both armies lay in sight of each other, and the advantage of the ground was greatly in favor of ours. I therefore called a council of war, and proposed that we should immediately attack the enemy. The prince and several of my own officers strongly opposed such a resolution; representing the extreme temerity of hazarding an action with an army almost double our numbers. When I could not persuade them
either

either by argument or entreaty, I was obliged to have recourse to artifice.

“ Let our conduct then, said I, be determined by a solemn appeal to the gods, who direct all human events at their pleasure, and who alone can with certainty fore-know them. I shall perform the rites of augury with my own hands. If the bird shall fly towards the enemy, we may depend upon it that the gods will crown our efforts with victory. But if on the contrary, it shall fly towards the opposite quarter, we may consider it as a signal from heaven to avoid an engagement, and to betake ourselves to the fastnesses of the country.” The proposal was readily embraced,

braced, and preparations were made for the augury.

On occasions of this kind I had been accustomed to practice two methods. One was by procuring birds from the woods in different parts of the country. For, on being let loose, they never failed to fly towards their former habitation. When I had not the choice of the bird, the other method was, to give it a certain twitch, which might be easily done unperceived, and would determine it to fly to whatever quarter I pleased. I could act at present only in the latter of those ways. Having therefore procured a bird in the neighbourhood of our camp, I
imme-

immediately put on the augural habit, which happened to be in my baggage; and after a short invocation to the gods of the country, I sent the bird upon its flight. An arrow could not have been directed more straight towards the enemy than the course in which it steered. “The gods, exclaimed I in a tone of enthusiasm, the immortal gods urge us on to victory and glory!” A sudden transport of joy broke forth into a general acclamation. I seized the auspicious moment, and instantly gave the signal for an attack. We marched against the enemy with an intrepidity which nothing could resist. After discharging a volley of arrows, we rushed
furiously

furiously upon them with sword and spear. At once they gave way on every side; and we pursued them with such slaughter as had never been known before in the bloodiest wars of Hetrusia.

The *Extispicium*, or the art of divination by the inspection of the entrails of animals, was equally chimerical with the former; and for one instance in which it may have been practised from superstitious simplicity, it was, in a thousand instances, the result of political artifice. This species of divination was peculiar to the priesthood at public sacrifices. The operator was enclosed by a wide circle, called the hallowed ground,

ground, upon which no person, but such as he chose, could intrude without the penalty of sacrilege. He had therefore an opportunity to impose upon the people whatever he pleased. To serve a particular purpose, I once knew a priest declare with affected astonishment to the spectators, that the victim had not a heart; though we know that it is impossible for any animal to exist a moment without that organ. On a similar occasion, I was present, when the priest exclaimed to the audience, "By the immortal gods! here are two hearts." Having afterwards an opportunity to see him in private, I charged him with the imposture. He.

treated me confidentially, and his answer deserves to be recorded. "Why, said he, the victim had one heart, and I hope you don't imagine that I have none."

But exclusive of intentional fraud, the priests themselves were extremely liable to deception. Though accustomed to the opening of animals, they knew nothing of anatomy. I could have persuaded almost any of them that the liver was the spleen, and have presented them with the gall-bladder, whilst they believed they were receiving one of the kidneys.

The divination by prodigies was properly not confined to any particular

cular class, but might be exercised by each of them within their respective departments. On all these subjects, I took the liberty which I had formerly done with the astrologer, to question the supposed reality of any connexion between the principles of those arts, and the events either in the natural or moral world. But if the Chaldeans were too insensible to be convinced of error, they proved too obstinate to acknowledge it.

In one of those who pretended to interpret dreams, I found more acuteness than in the others. When I hinted at my scepticism with regard to the principles of the art, he answered me in the words of Homer,

“ Dreams from Jove descend”. I immediately replied, “ And so, I believe, does the interpretation of them”. He suspected that I meant this in a sense very different from a compliment, and he was right in his conjecture. “ But, said he, if you admit that dreams proceed from above, you must also admit the possibility of their interpretation; for otherwise, what purpose could they answer?” “ In a very few instances, replied I, some of which are taken from the history of one of your own kings, and confirmed by evidence of the highest authority, I shall admit that dreams have been excited by the Supreme Power, but never that they have

have been interpreted without the aid of divine illumination". "Indeed, answered he, the art may well be called divine illumination; for it is that of divining by the light of science". "You now take for granted the question in dispute," said I. "I do not take it for granted, replied he with some warmth. Behold that figure," pointing to a statue. "That is the figure of a man whose abilities will do immortal honor to the art of interpreting dreams. That is the great Belteshazzar." "And that, replied I, is the very man who has confirmed the doctrine which I maintain." "That is impossible, said he. For Belteshazzar was the most celebrated interpre-

ter that ever existed. He was more than an interpreter, and was also a member of our college". "I know it, replied I; but he derived his illumination from another source than the principles of your science". "Why, I tell you, said he, that Belteshazzar received his education within these walls. He acknowledged it himself, and no man dares to insinuate that Belteshazzar was a liar". "You say right replied I. And permit me to tell you in return, that Belteshazzar did derive his illumination from the Supreme Power. The fact rests upon the authority of a man whom you have acknowledged, and all the world will acknowledge, not to have been a liar."

At

At this answer he appeared to be much confused, and made no reply; but bit his lip with that air of vexation which often accompanies a conscious impotency of resentment. Had our conversation continued longer, I should have urged the impossibility of reducing within any determinate rules of interpretation such a subject as that of dreams, which have neither bounds to their variety nor combination. As well might we attempt to calculate the duration of eternity, or measure the infinity of space. After a short silence I wished him good-day, and proceeded without any guide to the remaining department of the college.

C H A P. XIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

AN ACCOUNT OF A CURIOUS EX-
ORCISM.

OF all the departments in the Chaldean college, the Mecash-phim, was that which most excited the admiration of the public. It was the awful residence of the magicians, forcerers, necromancers, and in general of all those who were supposed to possess the art of performing preternatural atchievements. They even claimed the wonderful skill of stopping the river in its course,

course, of raising furious tempests in the air, of heaving the ocean to the clouds, and of bringing down the moon from the firmament. In a word, vulgar credulity had invested them with the power of the omnipotent God; and they reigned the great dictators of every thing human and divine. Whilst I was advancing towards this seat of magical enchantment, imagination presented to my mind the horrid fate of Ulysses' companions in the palace of Circe; but disdaining to follow the example of Eurylochus, I approached it with as much unconcern as I had before done the other three colleges.

On entering the spacious salloon, I
observed

observed that the walls were decorated with a plastic representation of the story which I had just been anticipating. In one compartment, Circe was reaching to the unfortunate voyagers her poisoned cakes and wine; in another she was whipping them with a switch into a hog's-eye; and in a third, having undergone their metamorphosis, they appeared in the form of swine. Adjoining to these was another large compartment, exhibiting the history of Medusa, with the whole dreadful family of the Gorgons. Though I was not afraid of being converted into stone at the sight of this hideous groupe, I turned away my eyes from

from objects so disagreeable, to view the other sides of the hall. They were hung round with an innumerable variety of productions, the implements and trophies of forcery. In one corner of the room were three witches, resembling infernal hags. They were boiling a large cauldron, from which issued a steam the most offensive that I had ever perceived in my life.

In the middle of the hall was one of the Mecashphim, holding a magic wand, and contemplating a circular figure which he had drawn on the floor. Immediately accosting him, “ I have heard, said I, the fame of this college, and am come to be convinced

vinced of your astonishing power by ocular demonstration. I beg that you will gratify me with the performance of some miracle." At this request he seemed surprised, and answered that it was not the business of the Mecashphim to perform magic rites for the gratification of idle curiosity. "I shall reward you so amply for it, said I, that you will find me the most munificent visitor you ever received." "Promises are easily made, answered he, but you may not be capable of performing them." "That you may have perfect security with respect to that circumstance, replied I, I shall this moment give you a draught upon the

the

the most eminent banker in Babylon." "What miracle do you desire to see performed?" said he. "I don't care what it is, answered I, provided it really be a miracle." He then mentioned several feats, which, as I knew them to be performed by flight of hand, I would not accept as a proof of his being endowed with magical power. "I have here a rod in my hand, said I, make this rod to blossom, as when it remained in the tree, and I shall not only acknowledge your power, but reward you with ten thousand Beluses of gold." Conscious of his incapacity, he declined the proposal. I afterwards mentioned a number of other experiments,

riments, to none of which would he submit.

Finding it in vain to urge him any farther with entreaties, I determined to try the effect of provocation, which was now the more likely to operate, as several persons had come into the hall, with the view, I supposed, of consulting him. "How have you the impudence to arrogate preternatural power, said I, when you cannot perform any one of the miracles which I have mentioned? I affirm it in the presence of this company, that you dare not bring the art which you profess to the test of experiment. You are an impostor, Sir, and as such I shall proclaim you through-

throughout Babylon.” His passion now rose to that height, that, snatching a serpent out of the hand of one of the witches, he threw it at me with all his force. I lifted it from the floor, and returning the compliment, struck him with it directly in the face; whilst all the spectators stood in amazement at the boldness of one who dared to contend with a magician within the walls of the college. “By all the powers of magic, exclaimed he, I shall this moment render you one of the most miserable of mortals. I shall deprive you of virility.” This was one of the most satisfactory experiments I could have desired; and

and I dared him to perform his menace.

With his magic wand he now drew a circle round him, and a curious scene immediately commenced. He delivered in verse to the witches his orders for conducting the process; and they, in their turn, during the execution of the orders, repeated them also in verse. The ceremony was performed in the following manner.

MAGICIAN.

Take an infant's tender stones,
Take a horse's rotten bones,
Take the fat of badger's reins,
And the blood from eunuch's veins:
Let them simmer long and slow,
That he ne'er may Venus know.

WITCHES.

WITCHES.

Here are th' infant's tender stones,
Here the horse's rotten bones,
Here's the fat of badgers reins,
And the blood from eunuchs veins:
They shall simmer long and flow,
That he ne'er may Venus know.

MAGICIAN.

Take the frog's pellucid spawn,
Take the left eye of a fawn,
Vapid palm-wine's effete lees,
And the tails of virgin-bees;
Mix the whole with melted snow,
That he ne'er may Venus know.

WITCHES.

Here's the frog's pellucid spawn,
Here's the left eye of a fawn,
Vapid palm-wine's effete lees,
And the tails of Virgin-bees;
We mix all with melted snow,
That he ne'er may Venus know.

MAGICIAN.

Take a waxen goat, the fire,
Take a knife made hot as fire,
Plunge it deep in both his groins,
Cut the nerves that serve the loins;
Round them make the mixture flow,
That he ne'er may Venus know.

W I T C H E S.

Here's a waxen goat, the fire,
 Here's a knife made hot as fire;
 We plunge deep in both his groins,
 Cut the nerves that serve the loins;
 Round them make the mixture flow,
 That he ne'er may Venus know.

G R A N D C H O R U S.

Ye gods of heav'n! Ye gods of hell!
 Seal with your pow'r this magic spell.
 Yes, ev'ry god of heav'n and hell,
 Confirms the mystic magic spell.

The whimsical solemnity of this scene, the vehemence of the actors, and the severity of the interdiction, joined to the horror and astonishment which appeared in the looks of the spectators, were such as perhaps no man in Babylon could have supported but myself. I exulted during the whole of the ceremony, and triumphed over every denunciation.

tion. "Go! said the magician, go! most miserable of men, and learn to dread the vengeance of the offended and omnipotent Mecash-phim." "Go! said the witches, go! thou most hapless and most contemptible of culprits; thou must live a perpetual alien to the joys and privileges of manhood." "Yes, replied I, I shall go: I shall go this moment to the temple of Venus, and ascertain, by experiment, the uncontrollable power of the gods, and the impotency of all your execrations." Having said this I took my leave of the college.

C H A P. XIV.

REFLEXIONS ON THE STATE OF
LEARNING IN BABYLON. VER-
SES PRESENTED TO SEMIRAMIS.

I Had now survey'd every de-
partment in the celebrated col-
lege of Chaldeans, the whole of
which, I was inform'd, contained
near a thousand persons, supported
chiefly at the expence of the crown.
It was a singular institution, and one
which doubtless did the highest honor
to the liberality of the Assyrian kings;
but I may safely affirm, that instead
of

of promoting, it actually retarded the cultivation of useful learning. It was a nursery of superstition, error, and imposture, which, under its powerful influence, overspread the whole eastern, and afterwards infected every nation in the western world. In the survey which I made, had I met with so much as one instance of what could be called real science? In the Ashaphim, where I might have expected to find the knowledge of the true God uncorrupted, their conceptions of the Supreme Power were degrading to reason; and they had defiled the principles of religion with the grossest idolatry. Except some observations relative to the rising

rising and setting of the stars, upon which however the Chaldeans had not erected, nor even attempted to erect any system of astronomy, the whole of their boasted science was nothing else than a mass of the most extravagant and ridiculous fictions; a compound of speculative error and of practical deception. In fact, they had totally mistaken both the nature of science, and the means by which it can be attained. Neglecting the improvement of the understanding, they hunted after knowledge in the wilderness of imagination, where every phantom was dignified with the name of truth, and every whim was regarded as profound and useful discovery.

discovery. Had the Median kings raised to the ground this celebrated college of Chaldeans, and at the same time extinguished the superstition which it had either supported or engendered, they would have approved themselves the most signal benefactors of human kind, and have performed an action more worthy of perpetual fame than the overthrow of the Assyrian monarchy.

It was to me a mortifying reflexion, that, though a period of fifteen hundred years had now elapsed since the Deluge, the human mind had scarce advanced one step in any department of useful knowledge, and in the most essential province, that of religion,

igation, its motion had been retrograde. I panted for the auspicious æra when the intellectual faculties should be roused from that lethargy in which superstition, imposture, and despotism had conspired to involve them. The light of science, though as yet I knew not of the event, was at this moment beginning to dawn in a different quarter. Seven men, who deserved more the admiration of the world, than the useless works which received the denomination of the Seven Wonders, were now beginning to cultivate philosophy in the states and colonies of Greece. The mists of simplicity and ignorance retarded for some time the progress of illumination;

nation ; but it afterwards shone forth with a splendor corresponding to that of the sun in his meridian glory. Then arose every muse that presides over genius or knowledge. History, which had hitherto been unknown, spread forth her splendid page, teaching wisdom by memorable examples, and delineating the various evolutions of human policy from cause to effect. Philosophy, Socratic philosophy now reared her heavenly countenance, and dispensed to the world the purest precepts of morality. Eloquence lifted up her voice, which shook the thrones of tyrants, and diffused, wherever it reached, an irresistible spirit of liberty amongst mankind ;

whilst Poetry raised her laurelled votaries to the pinnacle of fame. When by these the understanding had been exercised in the discovery of truth, and the imagination had been fired with great conceptions, then shone forth that light, which exalted the human mind to its highest pitch of perfection, and displayed the glorious rewards which are reserved for piety and virtue.

These are the "monuments more durable than brass." * These are they which alone can give lustre to the efforts of human ambition; and will survive with perpetual glory, when temples, and obelisks, and all

* Monumentum ære perennius.

the monuments of regal power shall
be laid in the dust.

As a conclusion to this chapter, I
shall, without any comment, subjoin
the verses presented to Semiramis
by the Governor's ancestor, and
which I had now received from
him.

VERSES ADDRESSED TO SEMIRAMIS.

O Thou ! whose lustre gilds Affyria's throne,
Whose royal cares applauding millions own,
Accept the tribute which thy fame inspires ;
Thy fame productive of the poet's fires,
Who scorns alike to taint his gen'rous lays,
With venal pomp, or prostituted praise.

How shall the muse in ardent verse display,
The matchless splendor of th' auspicious day,
When first thou, deckt in all thy radiant charms,
With rapture bless'd th' exulting monarch's arms ;
When

When festive triumph reign'd without alloy,
 And Babylon's tow'rs proclaim'd the public joy?
 How shall her strains, expanding with her view,
 Attempt the glorious subject to pursue,
 When cities captur'd, and when kings o'erthrown,
 Thou stretch'd thy conquests o'er a world unknown?
 Then India's plains beheld thy martial toils,
 Whilst vanquish'd nations trembled for their spoils.
 Then lofty Bagistan, untrod before,
 Thy pow'r acknowledg'd and thy trophies bore.
 The gods astonish'd saw thy structures rise,
 And hail'd a second Venus to the skies.

Long as Euphrates shall his waters roll,
 Long as shall stand the Babylonian mole,
 Long as thy empire's glory, ne'er surpast,
 Or thine own more than human works shall last;
 From envy, rage, and time itself secure,
 Thy fame, immortal princess! shall endure.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.